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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

The Bloc and the Middle East

Soviet political action in the Security Council on 17 July and a sharp increase in bloc propaganda indicate that the Communist world is launching a massive effort to line up world public opinion against Western actions in the Middle East. Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Communist China, and North Korea have already issued government statements patterned on the USSR's declaration of 16 July calling for popular agitation against the Western action. Popular demonstrations against the British and US governments have been organized throughout the USSR. The general line follows Izvestia's demand that "immediate and resolute steps to defend the national independence of Arab states" must be taken.

Meanwhile Soviet UN delegate Arkady Sobolev stated that the USSR will force into an emergency session of the General Assembly its resolution demanding immediate withdrawal of American and British troops. The USSR probably believes that even though the resolution may not pass the Assembly, it will garner enough favorable votes and abstentions to inhibit Western action in the Middle East. Moscow is equally prepared to back a Swedish resolution which would make the continuance of UN activity in Lebanon dependent on American troop withdrawal.

A Soviet diplomat in Paris warned that any armed attack against the new Iraqi Government would lead to military action by the USSR. This conversation seemed designed to probe US intentions in the Middle East. Pravda's first commentary on Lebanon on 16 July expressed the fear that the Lebanese landings might eventually lead to US intervention in Iraq.

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III. THE WEST

The Situation in Cuba

Simultaneous with the gradual release of American servicemen kidnaped by Cuban rebels, both the Cuban Army and the Castro forces are preparing for renewed fighting. The Cuban army commander at Guantanamo City, only about 10 miles from the US naval base, expects a big rebel attack any time and has requested strong tank and troop reinforcements to counter it. There are also other reports of impending attacks by Raul Castro.

Fidel and Raul Castro both appear to have strengthened their forces considerably in recent months and are reported in some areas to have prepared a series of as many as 18 ambush positions for defense in depth. They have received large shipments of arms from abroad and are known to have appropriated essential equipment from mining installations, plantations, and even the army itself, which has taken little effective action to halt them. Fidel would probably prefer to postpone a big offensive until his position is even stronger, but the publicity given Raul's operations since the kidnappings may have convinced the rebels they should act sooner.

The poor quality of Cuban Government troops, their evident reluctance to attack the firmly entrenched rebels, and their susceptibility to graft have all hampered Batista's efforts to regain control of traditionally antigovernment Oriente Province.

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Elections Scheduled for 20 July Causing Mounting Tension
In Bolivia

Impending elections for one half of the lower house and one third of the Senate--the second national elections with universal suffrage in Bolivian history--are giving rise to strong political tensions. Both Communist and rightist opposition groups are seeking to profit from unrest.

The left wing of the governing Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) is dissatisfied with the Movement's list of candidates. Leftist leader Juan Lechin apparently plans to swing support to Trotskyite or orthodox Communists in some areas. Such action might result in Communist representation in congress although the total Communist vote in 1956 came to only 1.5 percent.

Rightist opposition groups, which hold four of the 34 lower house seats at stake in the election, expect to make considerable gains on 20 July and to obtain a majority in the capital city of La Paz.

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